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ADDRESS
OF
HON. M. E. INGALLS
BEFORE THE
COMMERCIAL CLUB OF CINCINNATI,
ON THE
ACQUISITION OF THE PHILIPPINES,
JANUARY 21, 1899.

CINCINNATI,
THE ROBERT CLARKE COMPANY,
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MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN OF THE COMMERCIAL CLUB :

There has been so much said on this question, pro and con, in the newspapers and in the halls of Congress, that it is difficult to say any thing new, and it is much more difficult to make any statements without attempting to quote or dispute with those who have delivered arguments in regard to the question. It seems to be to-day the one question of great interest. I think we can all agree that if Dewey, after he destroyed the Spanish fleet, had sailed home, we should have been delighted. We should have avoided a difficult question and a vast amount of trouble ; and yet, the same thing is true of almost every day of our lives. Very few of us can go through the world like the current of a brook that breaks over no rocks or waterfalls. We have to face responsibilities ; we have to meet conditions ; and the wise and brave meet them boldly and unflinchingly as a part of the duty of life. So must the nation.

I have not much patience with statesmen who are trying to defeat the present treaty in order to prevent some supposed evil that may come hereafter. If the government has acted wisely and honestly up to date, why not stand by it and say so, and leave it for the future to develop such differences as may arise. Some of us were opposed to the Spanish war, but we all rejoice

in its results, and there are very few to-day who are not glad that Spanish dominion is ended on this western continent, and who will not agree that the suffering and expenditure have been well made for that purpose.

I wish some of those gentlemen who talk so loudly against the Philippines would tell us what they would have had the government do different from what it has done. I can well understand that the payment of twenty millions of dollars to the Spaniards is open to criticism. We had them beaten, and we could have forced any terms; but, as a business proposition, the payment of twenty millions was undoubtedly cheaper than to open the conflict or continue the contest, to say nothing about the humanitarian side of it. Would these gentlemen who lead this opposition have had us turn the islands back to Spain or leave them in their hands? This would have been the great crime of the nineteenth century. For nearly three centuries the Spaniard has governed these islands as badly as only Spain can. She has kept them from improving; she has kept a large portion of the inhabitants in barbarism; she has used every means known to civilization to extort money from the people that inhabit them. Between the church and the state, history records no worse government than she has furnished to these people. It so happened in the contest that we conquered the Spaniards in these islands and they came into our hands. What could be said as an apology for any government that turned them back to the cruelties and corruption of Spain? Certainly no American citizen would face such a contingency. But we hear it said, "Let them govern themselves." Very good; this may do if we find they

are capable of governing themselves ; but the two hundred and fifty odd years of maladministration of the Spaniards has not been such as to educate eight millions of people sufficiently to enable them to govern themselves. If we had left the islands it would have meant that the different chiefs and clans would have warred with each other until the islands were desolated, or Germany or England or some foreign country would have stepped in and controlled them. In the interest of civilization, in the interest of humanity, there can be no question but that the government thus far has acted wisely and well. The sovereignty of the islands is ours. The future will determine slowly, step by step, what to do. Whether we shall aid in securing a permanent government there, and then withdraw entirely ; whether we shall give the people of those islands autonomy in government and retain a nominal sovereignty, or whether we shall hold them absolutely, is yet to be determined. Humanitarian principles as well as conditions of trade must govern, to a large extent, this question. Whether this or that can be done constitutionally, I do not propose to discuss to-night. That is a legal question and you will find the best minds of the Republic arrayed on each side. Whatever we may conclude to do, unquestionably there will be a proper and legal way found to do it. This constitution of ours which we so reverence, and justly, will be found to be a wider and broader instrument than is claimed by some. In my life I have several times heard the tocsin sound its alarm against the shattering of the constitution and its proposed violation, but it seems to have come out of each contest stronger and better for the trial. One statesman who deems it wise politically

to oppose expansion will produce one set of authorities, and another who favors it will produce another class equally as good. There is nothing so changeable as political opinions.

“ They change with place, they shift with race,
And in the veriest span of time
Each vice has worn a virtue's crown,
All good been banned as sin or crime.”

Considered as a commercial question, I should say most decidedly we ought to hold the territory we have conquered. This great nation of ours must have its share of the commerce of the world. It lost a large part of the carrying trade of the Atlantic Ocean during the civil war. Slowly it has been getting back some portion of this, but the competition of the European nations is very severe and is likely to continue. The coming trade that we should compete for seems to be that of the Pacific Ocean. No man can predict or conceive what the twentieth century may bring forth in the islands and nations of the Pacific. If we wish to get our share of that commerce and wealth, we must hold the Philippines; we must build the Nicaragua Canal; we must build our cable lines, maintain our naval and military stations at Manilla and elsewhere, and be prepared to take our share of the commerce incident to the millions and millions of people that dwell within a few hundred miles of the Philippines. This all comes at a very fortunate time for our country. We are just entering upon a new career. Never was there such an industrial awakening of a great nation as is now going on in our case. We are to be the great manufacturing people of

the next century. With the cheapest and best coal in the world, with the cheapest and best iron, with the cheapest and best woods known, with good and substantial food at a minimum price for the laborer, there is no nation under the sun, Anglo-Saxon or Mongolian, who can compete with this country. Already we are making more iron and mining more coal than any other nation. The year 1896 was the turning point for this people. We decided then that we would be honest, that our standard should be the standard of the world, that our bills of exchange should be as good in Calcutta or Melbourne as those of any other country. This gave a great impetus to our commerce. The economies, which the panic of 1893 and the succeeding years forced, enabled us to meet the prices of the world, and with cheap raw materials, which I have alluded to, gave us the start which is just developing. The expansion of our business in the future is beyond conception. If we neglect this opportunity, we may turn it in other directions and lose our chance.

There is another side of this question which I would like to discuss, although it is ridiculed by some, and that is, the destiny or the direction which Providence gives to certain events and the control which it has over the affairs of men and nations. The growth of civilization and improvement of the world has been from the east to the west. It saw the first dawn of light in China and Egypt; passed through Greece and Rome; and then shone on the stormy waters of the North Sea; crossed the Atlantic, when the voyage was long and dangerous; and now, having practically spread over the American continent, it looks as though it was destined to traverse

the waters of the Pacific and reach in the twentieth century the land from which it first took its departure ; again, probably, to roll around in its ever-recurring cycle until civilization shall have reached its limit, and after that, the end.

It is all well enough for people to preach and say that it is better to remain as we are, that we shall be happier, that we ought not to branch out ; so it might be said of individuals. It is always easier for the ox to be fattened than to work, but it is a question whether it brings the same enjoyment. "The hart by the hunter pursued, that far from the hilltop bounds swift through the blue solitude, is more to be envied, though death with his dart follow fast to destroy, than the tame beast that, pent in the paddock, tastes neither the danger nor joy of the mountain and all its surprises." When I hear these statesmen making their arguments that we should remain at home, that we should not go abroad and tempt Providence, it reminds me somewhat of the days of my youth, when I was keeping school in the State of Maine, at the large salary of fifteen dollars a month, and concluded I would try my fortunes by going west, and on mentioning the matter to an old uncle of mine, who was a farmer in that hillside country, he said, "Well, my boy, it is tempting Providence ; you had better let well enough alone." Possibly I had, but I certainly have had more enjoyment of life by leaving than I would have had if I had remained in that country to vegetate. The nation that has not taken advantage of circumstances, that has not pushed out into the world, has decayed and gone back. The greatest example in the world of expansion is that of England. Compare the

England of two centuries ago with that of to-day. Is there a man who for an instant will claim that it would have been better for her people if she had adopted the policy of the anti-expansionists, confined herself exclusively to the British Islands and given up her pursuit of foreign dominion and trade? She stands to-day to my mind the most brilliant example (following the old Romans, but in better lines) of the power of a people to aid in civilizing and enlightening the world. There comes to my mind an incident in her career almost like our own. Suppose on that fated day when Wolfe defeated Montcalm on the Plains of Abraham the same spirit had ruled in England which is so common with us to-day and her statesmen had said, "We will not take advantage of this victory and we will not possess this country." Montcalm had been the one man who had conceived the dream of an empire in the west for his country, but deserted and neglected by the king, who was in his dotage, he lost to France more than ever was lost to one nation in one campaign. England succeeded, but she might have said just as truly as we can say to-day: "Here is a race of people in Canada not of our blood, not speaking our language; we do not care to assume the responsibility of their government; it is beyond a stormy ocean, without the facilities of communication." Then, it took more than twice as long to communicate between England and Canada as it does to-day for the United States to communicate with the Philippines; there were no cables and she would have been justified in withdrawing her troops and leaving Canada to its fate; and yet she would have lost one of her best colonies and a land which has furnished opportunity for her sons beyond

any that she has ever secured; it has aided her commerce, it has built up the civilization of the world.

The history of our own country from its beginning until to-day has been one of expansion, and expansion beyond even the proposition of to-day in regard to the Philippines. From the first sailing of John Smith to the Virginias, or of the Mayflower to the Massachusetts' capes, it has been one steady tread of the Anglo-Saxon race pushing back the inferior Indian race and planting the seeds of civilization, over the Alleghanies—first through the wilderness, a longer and more difficult journey than to-day to the Philippines; then the Louisiana purchase, which was opposed in its day as thoroughly as expansion is opposed now; after that, the acquisition of California, which was more than one hundred days' distant from the capital and seat of government; all this has been in pursuance of the law of the world's progress and civilization, the tread of the conquering people marching west and fulfilling the law of a higher power than ours. The Philippines to-day, by fast steamers, are within fifteen day's sail of this country; by ordinary steamers, twenty-five days; by cable, within a few minutes' communication. Let us not allow ourselves to be misled and deluded by arguments of old men no longer willing to grapple with the great problems of life, or by capitalists, who with the timidity of millions, fear to risk any more—but let us rather encourage the warm, vigorous Anglo-Saxon blood to go forward fulfilling its destiny and doing our part for the future civilization of the world and the control of its commerce.